

WILL the WORLD ONCE AGAIN SEE WAR WAGED by ARMOR-CLAD WARRIORS?



Steel Helmets, Metal Breastplates, Gas-Proof Vizors and Huge Steel Shields Already Have Made Their Appearance in the Present Conflict.

BACK to the days of armor! Back to the days when every warrior was a walking battleship. It's the strangest revival of a lost art in history, but it is here already, and from the present indications there is no telling how far it will go.

First, you know—you have followed the war I mean—the battling nations found that armored fortresses were just the sort of fodder that an ambitious commander would desire to feed his huge howitzers on. The howitzers kicked big holes in steel and concrete and drove the warriors back to first principles, a wall of dirt and sod. The ghosts of Attila and of Otho the Dane chortled with glee. The howitzers were something bordering upon the wrath of Odin, and instinctively they shied at this invasion of divine rights. And Thor, in his mightiest days, had never conceived nor forged such impenetrability as that steel and concrete had seemed at Liege, Maubeuge and Namur.

But when they went to digging ditches and erecting palisades with scythe points as a friendly door mat for the future guest old Attila and Otho nudged each other and grinned.

Then came the second step. England discovered that the mortality amongst her men at the front was altogether too high. Fortwith she invented breastplates of plates of steel. They were bulletproof when several hundred of yards from the front, and where a rifle ball had lost some of its man-killing energy and efficiency.

Germany, with her usual long-sightedness, had already developed a shield which could be used to protect her machine gun men in action. It is true, the shield was cumbersome, but it worked, and thus laid the steps to another dip into the remote past, this time by France.

France went England Germany one better. She invented a shield that was practical, bulletproof, mobile. A man can hide behind it and move forward with almost impunity. She added the breastplate for the benefit of her commissary department, so that it could move through the land of spent balls with safety. Then for attack

she combined the two for the direct charge of the trenches.

The Germans drove the Allies into the third stage. They flooded the trenches of their enemies with deadly gases. To escape the gases the English and French were forced to invent a nose and mouth guard. The Germans who operated the gas machines supplied their men with helmets not unlike those used by American miners in rescue work.

The English seized upon this suggestion in the course of events and brought over from Wales thousands of similar helmets taken from the mines.

Here we have breastplate, shield and helmet.

Shades of King Arthur, Sir Lancelot and Sir Galahad!

The French, however, added the piece de resistance. It was the metal shrapnel and bulletproof cap. This, made of dull steel and topped off the helmet, gave it all the picturesqueness of the days of Charlemagne. This mind you within two hours' aeroplane ride of where old Charlemagne's wrath is supposed to hover, Aix la Chapelle.

So there they go. Over the plains where Attila and Otho played their merry game of devastation, where Hugh Capet did his bloody deeds, where Bayard, Oliver and the other Paladins wrote their names in the book of chivalry and where the Great Charles made and unmade the map of Europe.

Again we may see a revival of the old Roman attack in phalanx formation under cover of a wall of shields. Again we may behold horsemen, clad in steel, charging upon each other as they did several hundred years ago on the very spots where the conflict now is raging fiercest.

It's strange, too, the other long forgotten relief of wars in the dim days of history are coming into play. The ancients in the times when the Captains rode to battle in chariots attached sharp blades to the axles. These blades spinning with the wheels were a dangerous weapon to those who got in their path.

Now the armored cars are being equipped with blades that operate upon similar lines. Additional blades serve another purpose, and a very important one under the present conditions of warfare. These blades in a continuous band start below the front axle and in an arc ascend over the tannau of the car. The razor edge serves to cut wire stretched across the road in

enemy country. The Germans were the first to spring this device.

Another hark back to olden times is the catapult used to launch bombs from one trench into another. Even the crudest forms of this obsolete weapon are employed. Its silence in operation and the short range required for its purpose are the arguments in its favor.

It remained for the English to dig into history for a weapon that could be employed under circumstances that barred the use of the modern tools of destruction they possessed. It was in the house-to-house fighting around Arras that they hit upon the use of the bow and arrow.

For two days they had been trying to force their way through village streets. It was impossible for the British to shell the few houses that remained to be taken because of the peril to their own men. The same obstacle prevented the Germans from

clearing the town of the British.

In Dunkirk there had once been an archery club. For diversion a British sub-lieutenant who had an opportunity, picked up three or four bows and a few score arrows. These the officers had amused themselves with in the time they were relieved.

It was with some difficulty that the bows and arrows were brought up, but eventually they were gotten forward to the front and with them a can of petrol. Rags soaked in the inflammable fluid were tied to the arrow tips and that night the bombardment of the houses occupied by the Germans began. Despite the efforts of the Germans, the flames made such headway that they were driven from cover.

Even the sling, David's lethal weapon, is in vogue in some of the French trenches. It has been found handy to hurl bombs and hand grenades.

One ancient weapon that has retained its place in modern equipment, however, has had its day, and that is the lance. The Uhlans are practically the only cavalry outside of the Indians with the British and the Cossacks that have found this instrument of any value. One by one, the other organizations have tossed it into the discard.

It has been found unwieldy and on the western front, notably where the cavalry have little opportunity to charge it has been rendered excess baggage.

Another slipping back to the dark ages is the methods of concealment employed in the Dardanelles. There the Turks supplied the real surprise of this nature of the war. This, when they painted their faces green so as to be invisible in the foliage while sniping the enemy.

Australian officers were amazed when several dead Turks were found bedecked

in all the finery of savages. They were free with their praise, too, for they admitted that the scheme worked to perfection and it was almost impossible for their men to locate snipers who were so disguised.

The English went back to Shakespeare in the early days of the war in one of their movements against the Germans in Belgium. Literally, as in Macbeth, when the "Birnam woods walked" the British made a forest walk against the German lines.

The Germans only discovered the ruse in time to save themselves from a rout, so successful was the scheme.

In this instance the British cut masses of small brush and saplings. Concealed behind this cover they advanced gradually upon the Germans. A German officer who had been watching in the direction of the British for a long time had his eyes on a patch of green jutting out from the surrounding forest.

As he watched to his amazement he observed that the foliage was gradually becoming more and more distinct. He brought his glasses into play, but could observe nothing unusual for some time and was just about to pass up the incident when he detected a gleam of metal through an opening.

In an instant he awoke to what was taking place. Hurried directions were shot to the artillery and a brisk shelling of the suspected "forest" was followed immediately by its disappearance as the British, hurling away their concealment, dashed to the charge. A terrific engagement followed as the British made good their charge.

In the Dardanelles the British borrowed from Homer and tried the "wooden horse" trick this time with a steamer seemingly abandoned, which was allowed to drift casually ashore and beach itself. The Turks, chary of ammunition on what apparently was about to be profitable spoils, withheld their fire.

Shortly after the steamer was beached and from the side not exposed to the Turks, British troops debarked hastily and made a landing. Then they dug themselves in and since then have extended their lines well into the enemy's territory.

Day by day they are beginning to take on more of the aspects of their forbears. And as each day passes the period approaches when they may be compelled to actually revert to all of the equipment and methods of their forbears.

For that day of exhaustion is already being hinted at. The great economists of the world admit it.

Vanishing rapid fire guns, high-power explosives, and modern implements of warfare mean undoubtedly the return to nature's first weapons, the hand-forged steel sword and pike and the buckler and greaves of yore.

The time may come—some prophets say it is near at hand—when the warriors of Europe's battlefields will be combating, clad as in the days when Agamemnon stood before the walls of Ilion and when Achilles slew the lordly Hector.

Strange sights ahead; stranger, the turning back of the wheel of time that this last great war brings.

From the grand stand seats on this side of the great pond we look on, our wagers on the side to which we are closest. Maybe in time it will be our weird fate to see Mark Twain's greatest fancy fulfilled, "A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court."

Like "The Boss," we may be jolted back eight or nine hundred years and alone retain our modern arts and industries. Who knows?